



## **The Avenue Project Task Force**

Wednesday, October 19th, 2005

6:00pm-8:00pm

The Dorchester House

1353 Dorchester Avenue, Dorchester

### **Meeting Notes**

**Attendance: Task Force Members:** Michael Mackan, N. Paul Ton That, Arlene Lopes, Rosanne Foley, Jane Howard, Marissa Coleman, Richard O'Mara, Sean Denniston, Eileen Fenton, Leslie MacWeeney; Ralph DeNisco-BTD, Randi Lathrop-BRA, Inés Soto-BRA, and Jeremy Rosenberger-BRA

### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

- Meeting was called to order by the Dorchester Avenue Project manager Ines Soto.
- Ines asked for the Task Force to review the previous meeting notes and motioned for approval. The Task Force voted approval.
- Ines asked the Task Force for approval of the night's agenda and it was granted.

### **II. Review of Draft Vision Statement**

- The Task Force reviewed Rosanne's Task Force vision statement and the vision statement brainstorming session notes from the previous meeting.
- Ines initiated a brainstorming session regarding the vision statement. Ines provided a catalyst vision statement for the group to work off. It stated, "The Dorchester Avenue Project Task Force\_\_\_\_\_ to ensuring a safe, livable, clean, culturally diverse, inviting, and thriving avenue for\_\_\_\_\_."
- Some comments toward filling in the first blank were "seeks to" and "develop an action plan". Comments regarding the second blank were "all", "community", "future of...", and "all to enjoy". A mention of adding "strengthen the qualities, pride" was brought up by the group.
- Sean mentioned a vision of "...wanting Dorchester Ave to reflect the best things of Dorchester". Leslie added "...strengthen the qualities". Mike added "...the way life should be..."
- Leslie responded to the vision statement by stating that the Task Force has been given the task of how to make the Dot Ave better. Leslie also mentioned the possibility of breaking up into small groups to further discuss the vision statement. Mike thought the next meeting would be better attended by the group for brainstorming the vision statement. Rosanne asked Ines if she could bring some examples of mission statements to the next meeting. Leslie also mentioned that the vision statement should include artistic aspects of the culture.
- Ralph shared his Task Force vision statement with the groups: "The Task Force is ensuring Dorchester Avenue's identity as the vibrant, attractive & safe place where the many hearts of Dorchester come together to shop & play."

### **III. Briefing on the Trolley Tour**

- Ines asked the Task Force what they thought about the Trolley Tour. Jane thought it was good to get feedback from folks that are involved with certain areas. Rosanne thought it was important to better enhance the existing nodes on the avenue to encourage development in between.

- Ines then asked the group to list the comments about the Ave, starting with Lower Mills. Below is a listing by segment of the comments:

#### **Lower Mills**

- Newspaper boxes (too many), trees (dead and inventory), tree pits, clock, back alley of library (link to parking lot), streetlights should match w/Peabody square.

#### **Peabody Square**

- The citing of the historic clock makes traffic difficult, traffic is a problem, an RFP is going out, coordination of MBTA w/Ashmont and community, traffic light at Valley Road, firefighters (parking), parking, traffic flow, and street lights are inconsistent. Jane mentioned there are lots of forces creating beneficial things for the Peabody Square area.

#### **Field's Corner**

- Ed mentioned the new Melville Ave apartments do not blend in with the neighborhood. Ines said they were developed as of right (i.e. they met all zoning requirements). Mike asked if there is a zoning threshold to prevent certain as-of-right's. Rosanne commented that maybe they should take a closer look at as-of-right projects. Ines replied that certain towns are instituting a 150 square foot development threshold to prevent or review such instances. Leslie added that some European cities give out accreditation buildings in the form of plaques to encourage a form of competition. Sean commented that this tactic could give a sense of place and continuity.
- Jane discussed how the mall is a prime target for redevelopment. Rosanne added it would be suited for TOD development.
- Jane also discussed that Kit-Clark is a vital part of Fields Corner. She thought it would be great to give them a better site. Rosanne added that Kit-Clark was originally a furniture store and that is not setup for uses like Kit-Clark.
- Ralph commented that the Adams street intersection at Field's Corner is confusing and it clearly needs to be further investigated. He added the driveway that leads to Field's Corner behind the business's is dangerous. Arlene added that there are no stop sign's or bumps to prevent a safe exit for vehicular traffic. Rosanne suggested the driveway should be entrance only. Ralph highlighted the driveway provides access to multiple locations, maybe creating the problem. Arlene said this intersection is turn-at-will.
- Leslie suggested that the streetscapes could be created by local artisans and help art become a fabric of the Field's Corner intersection. Ines added that funding for this could be facilitated and there has been thinking about creative ways to handle these situations

#### **Freeport St.**

- Rosanne asked if there was a moratorium for auto use in this area and inquired about the zoning allowances for business's. Richard responded that if a building is closed for 24 months and the intended use does not conform to the zoning requirements, they would need to apply for a variance through ISD.
- Jane mentioned that there is a study for the Freeport intersection. A similar project to what is needed at Freeport St. is the recent project at the intersection of 93 and Columbia Road.
- Ralph added that this is one of the busiest cross streets on the Ave.

- Rosanne thought the intersection was hostile to pedestrians and can be considered a free-for-all.
- Ralph also mentioned that he recently found out about plans for parking on Dot Ave and Hancock regarding a possible China Pearl restaurant. Rosanne commented that ISD gave China Pearl a permit and has since retracted it. Eileen added that they would be coming to the Columbia/Savin Hill community meeting next month.
- Ines suggested that she'll add Jim Fitzgerald, the Dot Ave zoning point person at the BRA, for the next meeting.
- Jane commented that an effort to find out who owns what should be targeted. Randi responded that we can have Carolyn (BRA GIS department) do a land owners map. Jane also added that the Task Force should talk with the Dorchester Bay CDC.

#### **Savin Hill**

- Eileen pointed out the different kinds of street lights, sidewalk design in the area might be good for the rest of the Ave, a 56 unit condo complex w/underground parking is being developed, and St. William's future usage is up in the air. Paul thought the Archdiocese changed their mind and wanted to transfer and not sell the property.

#### **IV. Discuss Charrette Comments—Identify Priorities**

- Ines initiated a discussion regarding the priorities for the Ave and the timeframe they should be targeted. Below is a listing of the comments:

<b>Short Term</b>	<b>Mid Term</b>	<b>Long Term</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sidewalk repair</li> <li>▪ Crosswalk repainting</li> <li>▪ Graffiti</li> <li>▪ Contact ISD-Newspaper boxes</li> <li>▪ Traffic Striping</li> <li>▪ Trashcans/removal at Fields Corner</li> <li>▪ Hokey usage</li> <li>▪ City ordinance enforcement</li> <li>▪ Citizens Bank-Missing address</li> <li>▪ Dead tree removal</li> <li>▪ Street light inventory</li> <li>▪ Coordination between MBTA and Field's Corner</li> <li>▪ School bus transportation issues at Field's Corner</li> <li>▪ Parking at Mall-Tax breaks/Allowances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Business / Assistance-ReStore</li> <li>▪ RFP-Transportation</li> <li>▪ Adopt a Barrel-Campaign/Education</li> <li>▪ Coordination of Trash Services</li> <li>▪ Pedestrian safety measures</li> <li>▪ Consistent public signage</li> <li>▪ Reward system for business's-"Golden Broom Award"</li> <li>▪ Tree Survey</li> <li>▪ Revisiting Dot Ave zoning code</li> <li>▪ Parking plan-Curbside &amp; Loading zones</li> <li>▪ Parking Meter Feasibility</li> <li>▪ Storefronts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Signalization</li> <li>▪ Intersection reconfigurations</li> <li>▪ Parking</li> <li>▪ Street signs-Visibility</li> <li>▪ Trees &amp; Grates</li> <li>▪ Implementing zoning</li> <li>▪ Off-street parking</li> <li>▪ Mall</li> </ul>

## **V. November Community Meeting**

- Ines talked about how the November Task Force meeting would be open to the public. She said the Task Force would meet at 6pm and have a half hour to eat and discuss the night's meeting. The public meeting would start at 6:30 and run until 8pm. Ines mentioned how we want the Task force and the public involvement to be transparent. Eileen commented that they don't want the Task Force to get bogged down. Rich thought there should be a public meeting every third month. Jane added that city agencies should address Task Force working sessions.
- Ines said November 16<sup>th</sup> would be the public meeting. She mentioned that maybe there will a PowerPoint presentation and 3D model presentation.

## **VI. Adjourn**

- Meeting was adjourned at around 8:05pm.